

Message Text

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SUBJ: PRESS REACTION TO DANISH F-16 CONTRACTS

REF: (A) COPENHAGEN 2328, (B) COPENHAGEN 2346

SUMMARY: DANISH PRESS REACTION TO THE JULY 15 CONTRACT AWARDS FOR F-16 CO-PRODUCTION IN DENMARK HAS VARIED FROM STRICT REPORTING OF THE EVENT ITSELF TO LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS OF POLITICAL ISSUES RESURRECTED FROM A YEAR AGO. THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY CENTERS ON THE APPLICABILITY OF TWO OLD DANISH LAWS REGULATING THE PRODUCTION OF WAR MATERIAL AND ON THE EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OF THE F-16 CONTRACTS. ALTHOUGH CONTROVERSIAL, THE ARTICLES HAVE NOT JARRED THE DANES FROM THEIR SUMMER PURSUITS OF SUN AND SURF. END SUMMARY

1. DANISH PRESS COVERAGE OF LAST THURSDAY'S F-16 CONTRACT AWARD CEREMONY BETWEEN GENERAL DYNAMICS CORP. AND TWO DANISH FIRMS (PER UDSEN AND STANDARD ELECTRIC) HAVE BEEN REASONABLY FAVORABLE. THE CEREMONY TOOK PLACE AFTER A WEEK OF PRESS AND RADIO DISCUSSION ON THE QUESTION OF THE LEGALITY OF THE CONTRACTS UNDER DANISH LAW (SEE COPENHAGEN 2328) AND WAS ATTENDED BY SEVERAL DANISH NEWSPAPER AND TELEVISION REPORTERS.

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TWO DANISH STATUTES DATING BACK TO 1937 PRECLUDE THE

MANUFACTURE AND EXPORT OF WAR MTERIAL BY OTHER THAN "WHOLLY OWNED" DANISH FIRMS. PRESS DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUES REVOLVED AROUND THE QUESTIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES WAR MATERIEL IN THE CASE OF F-16 WORK IN DENMARK AND WHETHER OR NOT THE COMPANIES AWARDED CONTRACTS COMPLY WITH THE "WHOLLY OWNED" RESTRICTION.

2. THE JULY 16 EDITION OF POLITIKEN (LEFT OF CENTER) STATED: "MINISTER OF JUSTIC ORLA MOLLER HAS INFORMED US THAT THOSE PARTS (OF THE AIRPLANE) WHICH WE MANUFACTURE FOR THE F-16 AIRCRAFT CANNOT BE CONSIDERED WEAPONS." WITH THIS INFORMATION THE AMERICAN OWNED KIRKS FACTORY OF HORSENS (STANDARD ELECTRIC) YESTERDAY DENIED THAT THEY ARE BREAKING THE DANISH WEAPONS LAW IN DELIVERING VARIOUD EQUIPMENT TO THE AMERICAN FIGHTER PLANE." THE ARTICLE CONTINUED BY STATING: "IF ORLA MOLLER HAS SAID THIS, IT IS CONTRARY TO WHAT HE SAID LAST YEAR DURING THE DISCUSSION ON THE AIRCRAFT PURCHASE IN THE FOLKETING DEFENSE COMMITTEE. DANISH FIRMS WHICH ARE INVOLVED IN THE CO-PRODUCTION OF THE F-16 WILL BE COVERED BY THE WAR MTERIEL LAW. THE LAW SPECIFIES THAT FIRMS WITH FOREIGN CAPITAL MAY NOT BE GIVEN PERMISSION TO MANUFACTURE WAR MTERIEL."

3. IN RESPONSE TO THE POLITIKEN QUESTIONS, MR. KNUD JACOBSEN, DIRECTOR OF STANDARD ELECTRIC, STATED: "THE PARTS BEING MANUFACTURED COULD JUST AS WELL BE INSALLED IN A CIVILIAN LANE. IF WE CONTINUE THINKING ALONG THESE LINES, IT MAY END WITH OUR DISCUSSING WHAT BRAND OF CHEWING GUM THE PILOTS IN THE F-16 MAY USE." THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES BY COMMENTING THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO GET A COMMENT FROM THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE ON THE CURRENT CASE BECAUSE DEFENSE AND JUSTICE MINISTER ORLA MOLLER IS AWAY AND "THE AFFAIR IS SURROUNDED BY THE OATH OF SILENCE."

4. CONTINUING THE SAME THEME, AKTUEL (SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC) ASKED IF DANISH PARTICIPATION IN F-16 PRODUCTION WAS LEGAL AND COMMENTED THAT DANISH FIRMS' UNCLASSIFIED

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PARTICIPATION IN THE PRODUCTION HAD SUDDENLY BECOME "DYNAMITE" FOR THE RADICALS. JENS BILGRAV-NIELSEN (RADICAL, MEMBER OF THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, BELIEVES THAT DANISH PARTICIPATION IN PRODUCTION WILL LEAD TO VIOLATION OF THE LAW. HE POINTS OUT AONG OTHER THINGS THAT FOREIGN FIRMS OR CORPORATIONS WITH FOREIGN CAPITAL MAY NOT MANUFACTURE WEAPONS IN THIS COUNTRY. BILGRAV-NIELSEN PUT A SERIES OF QUESTIONS TO DEFENSE

MINISTER ORLA MOLER WHO DID NOT HAVE TIME TO REPLY OFFICIALLY BEFORE HE TRAVELLED TO THE USA. HE DID, HOWEVER, DENY TO AKTUELT THAT THERE WAS ANY PROBLEM IN RELATION TO THE WEAPONS LAW. THE ARTICLE CONTINUED WITH AN OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONTRACT PROCEDURES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND DENMARK AND DISCUSSED THE CHECKS AND BALANCES INCORPORATED INTO THESE PROCEDURES TO ENSURE THAT DENMARK WOULD RECEIVE ITS FAIR SHARE OF THE PROGRAM. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDED WITH A VERY POSITIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES OF THE F-16, REITERATING THAT IT WAS CHOSEN BY AN INTERNATIONAL PANEL OF EXPERTS "AS BEING A GENERATION AHEAD OF THE MOST ADVANCED SOVIET AIR-PLANE AND WAS THE CHEAPEST IN THE COMPETITION WITH L SWEDISH VIGGEN AND FRENCH MIRAGE."

5. THE INDEPENDENT-CONSERVATIVE BERLINGSKE TIDENDE OF THE SAME DAY REVIEWED THE CONTRACT DETAILS OBJECTIVELY BUT AMPLIFIED JACOBSEN'S REMARKS. JACOBSEN IS QUOTED AS SAYING: "BEFORE WE EVEN BEGAN TO SEND IN BIDS FOR THE NEW PLANES, WE ASKED THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE WHETHER THE PARTS WE WERE INTERESTED IN MANUFACTURING WERE AFFECTED BY THE DANISH WEAPONS LAW. WE RECEIVED THE REPLY THAT THEY WERE NOT BECAUSE THE PARTS ALSO CAN BE USED IN CIVILIAN PLANES."

7. COMMENT: CURRENT DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE F-16 ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE ARGUMENTS THAT PRECEDED ITS SELECTION OVER A YEAR AGO.
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